

Knowing Migraine

Introduction

Migraine is a common type but a more severe form of headache affecting millions of people worldwide. The intensity of pain ranges from mild, moderate to severe. A migraine attack may be associated with symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, or sensitivity to light and sound. In many people, a throbbing pain is felt only on one side of the head. The headache may last from 4-72 hours. Migraine are painful but fortunately are not life-threatening.

Migraine aren't the same for everyone. Some people who get migraine have warning symptoms, called an aura, before the actual headache begins. An aura is a group of symptoms that serves as a warning sign that a headache is coming. The aura may consist of seeing flashing lights, having numbness or tingling in the face, hand or legs having a disturbed sense of smell, having difficulty speaking, nausea/vomiting or uneasiness, etc. However, only about one-third of individuals who have migraine headaches experience aura. Most of the migraine patients do not experience any aura.

Not all headaches are migraine. Usually, your doctor can tell that your headache is a migraine headache by asking you specific questions and conducting a good examination.

Characteristics Of Migraine Headache

- Pain typically on one side or part of the head
- Pain has a pulsating or throbbing quality



- Moderate to intense pain affecting daily activities
- Headache along with nausea or vomiting
- Sensitivity to light or sound
- Attacks that last from 4-72 hours or sometimes longer



- Visual disturbances



- Exertion such as climbing stairs makes headache worse.

Trigger Factors

Many individuals with migraine can identify triggers that cause or aggravate the headache.

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- Those related to your body - Stress & anxiety, sleep (excessive or less), skipping meals, habits of fasting, schedule changes, hormonal changes etc.
 - Those related to the environment - Pollution, particular odour (s), exposure to sun, noise (s), light (s) & bright screens, weather changes, fan or AC breeze, travel stress etc.



- Those related to food - Alcohol, cheese, paneer, processed meat, monosodium glutamate (found in Chinese food, and other fast food), citrus fruits, chocolate, caffeine-over usage/withdrawal, excessive tea etc.



Tips For Controlling Migraine Triggers

It is important that the trigger factors are identified as they can help prevent the migraine attacks.

- Triggers of migraine are different in each patient.



- Triggers may also vary from one time to another in the same patient.
- Combination of triggers may lead to migraine headaches more easily.



- The better the control of triggers, the lesser the medicines required to control headaches.
- Anything and everything can be a trigger for some sensitive patients.



- You have to be your own detective, identify and avoid the factors which trigger your migraine headache.
- A good way a person can identify triggers is by keeping a headache diary.

Headache Diary

In the Headache Diary the person may write down the following:

- When does your headache occur?
- How severe is it?



- What have you eaten?
- How long do you sleep?



- Any other symptoms associated?
- Women should note whether the headache has any relation to their menstrual cycle?



- Other important factors, if any



Migraine Management

There is no specific cure for migraine headaches. The goal is to prevent symptoms by avoiding or changing your triggers. Also, there are a variety of medications available that may help you fight the pain.

It is important to find the medicine that works best for you with the help of your doctor.



Some medicines help stop the pain when the migraine starts. These are called "Pain Control" medicines. Pain control medicines should be taken as soon as you think you're getting a migraine.



If your migraines happens often and you cannot find what triggers them, your doctor may try to prevent these migraine attacks by giving medications to be taken daily and not just at the time of the headache. This is called "Preventive Treatment".



Let the doctor decide what suits you best.

Some Helpful Tips For Migraine Patients

- Keep a headache diary & record your attacks.
- Find out if certain foods trigger your migraines and avoid them.



- Ask your doctor if any medicines you are taking is a trigger for migraine.
- Avoid extreme changes in temperature and weather.



- Schedule your day well to lower the amount of stress in your life, if possible.
- Eat at regular times.



- Avoid loud noise.
- Take regular medicines as advised by your doctor.
- Exercise regularly.



When Migraine Symptoms Begin

- Drink water to avoid dehydration, especially if you have vomited
- Rest in a quiet, darkened room



When you get migraine symptoms, try to treat them right away. The headache may become less severe.



See your doctor often while you are on treatment. Be sure to keep track of which medicines you've tried and how well they worked.

Follow your doctor's advice regarding medications. You should not stop the treatment until your doctor advises you to do so.

Rating:



Your rating: None

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